

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

18 January 2001

Projects Reviewed

Municipal Civic Center
Pacific Northwest Aquarium
Sand Point/Magnuson Park
8th and Stewart

Convened: 11:00am

Adjourned: 5:00pm

Commissioners Present

Donald Royse
Ralph Cipriani
Jack Mackie
Cary Moon
Sharon E. Sutton
Tory Laughlin Taylor
David Spiker, Commissioner Elect

Staff Present

John Rahaim
Layne Cubell
Brad Gassman
Marianne Pulfer

18 JAN 2001 Project: **Municipal Civic Center**
Phase: Update

Previous Reviews: 2 December 1999 (Scope Briefing), 16 March 2000 (City Hall/ Schematic Design Concept), 20 April 2000 (Open Space Conceptual Design), 18 May 2000 (Concept Briefing), 17 August 2000 (Schematic Design), 21 September 2000 (Schematic Design), 2 November 2000 (Client Group Meeting), 4 January 2001 (Schematic Design Discussion)

Time: .5 hours (SDC Ref. # 221 | DC00119)
(SDC Ref. # 221 | DC00139)
(SDC Ref. # 221 | DC00143)

Actions: None

John Rahaim presented an overview of the recommendations from the Civic Center Programming Focus Group to the Civic Center design team. While generally supportive of the overall design, the group notes its concern about the quality and function of the public open spaces and the need for establishing a staff and budget dedicated exclusively to the management of these spaces. The civic nature of the campus should be the predominant expression, with the citizens of Seattle being the primary users. The incorporation of retail uses is appropriate, but only where they complement civic uses. While the group supports the goal of an 18-hour environment, members believe that it is unrealistic to achieve at this time in this location. General use recommendations were made as to specific uses that should be included within the civic complex. These include the development of a Cultural Café, services for the homeless and working poor, and a variety of meeting spaces, including a restaurant with outdoor seating options.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Asked when the Commission will see the Public Safety Building site component of the project especially in relation to the public spaces.
- Is concerned about the accessibility and visibility of the Cultural Café in regards to the goal of making the workings of government visible and encouraging a positive civic attitude. Supports the development of a team to investigate this and suggests looking at the way other civic buildings have achieved a similar goal. Suggests that Seattle Public Utilities might help with this because of their demonstrated ability in the area of public education on their facilities and services.
- Is concerned about the connection between the Civic Center and Key Tower and does not want this important issue to be addressed retroactively.

18 JAN 2001 Project: **Pacific Northwest Aquarium and Master Plan Addendum**

Phase: Briefing

Previous Review: 16 December 1999 (Scope Briefing), 6 March 1997 (Master Plan Briefing), 21 September 2000

Presenters: Lee Copeland, Weinstein Copeland Architects
 Doug Streeter, Terry Farrell & Partners, Architect
 Leslie Magid, SEAS
 Bob Wicklein, Seneca Group
 George Willoughby, SEAS

Attendees: Emel Alan
 Brodie Bain, Weinstein Copeland Architects
 Karen Kiest, Murase Associates
 Jack van Kinsbergen
 Ethan Melone, SPO
 Bert Gregory, Mithun Partners
 Jan Oscheritz, CBO
 Art Skolnik
 Patricia Stambon
 Kelly Walker, Arcade
 Helen Welborn, CBO
 Michael Woodland, The Seattle Aquarium
 Ruri Yamplonsky, SAC

Time: 2 hours (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00041)

Actions: The Commission appreciates the thorough briefing, and makes the following comments and recommendations:

- appreciates the formalization of a program concept that will inform the design. The Commission is supportive that the Aquarium will be designed “from the inside out” and asks the team to clarify how the educational component of the mission will be understood from the street. The Commission is supportive of the Aquarium as both a civic landmark and signature building on the waterfront yet want it to be more than a tourist attraction
- asks the team to keep in mind that this project is funded in part by public money. Proponents should preserve the educational and public philosophy and not let private money deter them
- are encouraged by the process oriented and experiential urban design analysis and hope that the sense of urban obligation will be incorporated into the mission statement and design philosophy
- asks the team to consider the people who live in the adjacent park and dwell in the neighborhood. Proponents make sure that, on the larger scale, the design has a civic expression and adheres to the principles of the mission statement
- urges the team to maximize the interaction between visitors and researchers
- asks the team to do something creative with Pier 59 if it is historically landmarked and chosen for the site. Proponents should make it clear which part of the building is new to complement the authenticity of what is already there

- **asks the team to improve the east/west connections between the Aquarium's waterfront site and the opposite side of Alaskan Way.**

The Seattle Aquarium project team updated the Commission on the development of the project but will not proceed further on schematic design until the Landmarks Board makes a decision on the site. The team reiterated the primary goals of stewardship and education that govern the mission of the project. They stated that separate teams of architects and interior designers have been selected because of the signature presence of the exterior and the importance of exhibition design. The team confirmed the need to remember that it is both a cultural and a public institution that will function as a portal to the Northwest. It should be open to weather and views to create a transition zone between the land and the water. It should convey a sense of inquiry and facilitate understanding coupled with beauty. It should also provide for a variety of species and relate to the identity of the surrounding area.

A five-month investigation was executed by the team to determine what makes an aquarium successful. This research informs the guiding principles for the design. The team identified these as follows:

- to design the Aquarium from the inside out
- to give the project both geographic breadth and a Northwest focus
- to give it content breadth by showing animals in their habitats
- to provide informational breadth with supporting exhibits that will include revenue producing exhibits

Two large "Premier" exhibits will be multi-sensory "big deal" experiences. The "Rocky Coast" exhibition outlined in the Concept phase (9.21.00) fulfills this in the way that it is an aggressive, loud and energetic environment. This will be a multi-species exhibit that includes otters and seals. The second "Premier" exhibit is a high-tech exhibit that shows both large mammals and the activity of more slow moving species. The idea is that with the use of technology some of more subtle marine life can be viewed. This will involve some live exhibits. The third exhibit will highlight the life and habitat of salmon.

The general approach to the educational component of the Aquarium is that it not be segregated from the exhibits, but integrated with the exhibits will be "discovery zones", spaces for interpretive learning and areas for extemporaneous groups. There will not be only one route but multiple routes that visitors can follow.

The primary issues that govern the design of the open space are as follows:

- recognition of the grid shift
- concern for traffic flow and pedestrian circulation
- required public access to waterfront and ends of piers and acknowledgement of waterfront activities
- recognition of the broken pattern of the historic waterfront development and the site coverage limit of 50 percent that reflects this
- protection of the view corridors

Although the team has not yet developed an architectural response due to the problem of site selection,

they have outlined responses to the landscape. These involve the development of below deck space, the optimization of long-distance and water-sheet views. Although the ruling design concept is to design from the inside out, the proponents related the design to the metaphor of the container, shell or microcosm.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Recognizes that the team can only go so far without knowing which site will be chosen and asks if there is anything the Commission can do to expedite the site selection. Is concerned that the budget for the actual project is being used up on speculative design and process.
 - Proponents stated that a decision is to be made by the Landmarks Board February 21st.
- Appreciates that education is important and asks the members of SEAS how they will maintain the educational mission and not have it turn into a retail mission to stay alive. Urges the team to avoid a store that is twice the size of the exhibits and sells nick-knacks of the exhibits. Asks if SEAS will have to sell the naming rights.
 - Proponents stated that they have to find a way to be self-sustaining, but would have to seriously consider any substantial offer on naming rights. Proponents stated that they would not compromise the mission of education and stewardship and prefer to look to research institutions for assistance. They will also rent out exhibits at night for income. Proponents assert that they will not teach animals tricks.
- Appreciates the analysis of the urban situation but asks how it will affect the design.
 - Proponents stated that the team is looking for a way to relate the project to the existing architecture in the area. Since movement characterizes the area, they hope to accommodate the changing view corridors, offer ways to appreciate the changing tides from the open space, and celebrate the activity of wildlife along the shore.
- Is concerned about the amount of psychological space required by marine life.
 - Proponents stated that they are sensitive to this, but with smaller marine life the needs are more biological. Proponent asserts that fish can live better if they are taught survival activities.
- Appreciates that learning will be both distant and experiential and asks if the response to context will be by repetition or contrast. Hopes it is to be the latter. Asks how the Aquarium will be perceived on the part of those who do not use the facility. How will the general public read it? What kind of message does “containment” convey? What is the hidden curriculum?
- Ask how much contact researchers will have with visitors.
 - Proponents stated that there will be a joint endeavor between the University of Washington and SEAS and there will be funding from the National Science Foundation and the Neptune Project.
- Is concerned about the way the waterfront is cut off psychologically from the fabric of downtown and the east side of the street. Considers the Baltimore waterfront as a good example to look at. Encourages the team work with SEATRAN on this.
- As regards the Premier exhibits, considers the salmon show to be contextually based but considers as folly the Rocky Coast exhibit.

18 Jan 2001 Project: Sand Point/Magnuson Park

Phase: Briefing

Previous Reviews: 5 November 1998 (Briefing), 9 September 1999 (Briefing), 17 February 2000 (Scope Briefing), 20 July 2000 (Scope Briefing)

Presenter: Eric Gold, DOPAR

Diane Hilmo, SandPoint/Magnuson DOPAR

C. David Hughbanks, SandPoint/Magnuson DOPAR

Attendees: George Deleau, SSCA, DOPAR

Kevin Bergsrud, SandPoint/Magnuson DOPAR

Mike Usen, EDAW

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00036)

Action: The Commission appreciates the team's work in carrying out the modified Jones and Jones Master Plan approved by the Council Resolution, and makes the following comments:

- **urges the City and DOPAR to explore the use of parking fees as a source of park revenue as opposed to charging for the use of various courts and fields and as a means of discouraging SOV use**
- **recommends that the team avoid compartmentalizing the sports areas from the rest of the Park with landscape buffers**
- **asks that the drainage system that connects the artificial play surfaces and the wetlands be revealed**
- **recommends alleviation of heat sinks in the area.**

The proponents confirmed that the Blue Ribbon Report remains the ruling guide to the project. The current contentious issues include the siting of the off-leash area, which is awaiting a Supreme Court decision, the location of the Community Gardens, and the myriad issues pertaining to the sports fields. The team has taken the position that the Wetlands will be maintained in spite of demands by various sports pressure groups to increase the number of fields for specific uses.

The Magnuson Park Concept Plan identifies two areas for out door athletics. The Sports Meadow area is designated as an open natural turf area used for soccer, disc-golf, and volleyball. In this area are currently two softball fields and a soccer field. The Sports Fields area west of the Magnuson Wetlands is intended for high-use soccer, baseball and softball fields, competitive running, tennis, and basketball. There are currently \$9M from the Pro Parks Levy earmarked for the design or construction of the project. Total cost estimates will be available by late January 2001.

The team proposed alterations to the original Jones and Jones Plan that include:

- reconfiguring the baseball fields so that players will not be facing south
- including 15 sports-fields with artificial all-weather surfaces
- eliminating the running track
- grouping the indoor and outdoor tennis courts

- creating five smaller parking lots instead of one big lot
- increasing the distance between the children's playground and the soccer fields
- providing additional fields for Little League baseball and soccer
- building 3 restrooms
- landscaping the walkways that connect the Wetlands to other areas
- providing field lighting
- creating the artificial sportsfields with soil removed from the Wetlands subject to environmental impact review with Magnuson Wetlands and the south peninsula park drainage needs

The team outlined the following design program elements for the Sports Meadow:

- creating a sand-based turf surface with subsurface drainage and automatic irrigation
- allowing for non-athletic event use
- limiting use to that allowed by the condition of the natural turf surface and available natural light

The plan for the North Shore Recreation Area for non-motorized boating is a composite of previous schemes and includes the following elements:

- an area for large boats for special events
- an uncovered storage area for non-motorized boats

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Asked how the drainage functions for the artificial surfaces.
 - Proponents stated that the drainage relies on sub-grade drains similar to the Queen Anne Bowl and Husky Stadium. There is no chemical treatment; the excavation is about 18 inches; in the center of the field is about 14 inches of mineral aggregate and on the side is about 18 inches of the same; it is covered with a polypropylene mat; this is then infilled with a sand and rubber mix. The system is highly porous and durable. The field has a subtle crown in the center and two drains along the sides.
- Would like to know if there will be handicapped access for viewers.
 - Proponents explained that the park is primarily for people who are playing and not for spectators. Events that will attract spectators can use the facilities at Nathan Hale High School or the University of Washington. However, because of the flatness of the site and the scattering of the parking and restrooms, access is generally not a problem.
- Appreciates that the team has not planned for the maximum amount of parking but thinks that in light of the fact that the park is intended for recreation the users should not be charged for the use of facilities. Instead the park could be supported by parking fees for SOV drivers, which will therefore create incentives for the use of public transportation.

- Proponents appreciated the suggestion.
- Asks the team find a way to integrate the field drainage system and Wetlands in a visible way.

18 Jan 2001 Project: **8th and Stewart (since renamed 1925 9th Avenue)**

Phase: Alley Vacation – Pre-petition Briefing

Presenters: Tom Berger, The Berger Partnership
 Gary Carpenter
 Keith Dearborn, Dearborn and Moss
 Jill Janow, Pike/Pine Urban Neighborhood Council
 Dennis Meier, SPO
 Jim Rothwell, Callison Architects

Attendees: Elizabeth Stacishin-Mura, The Berger Partnership
 Nathan Brow, Bentall
 Mike Scott
 Malli Anderson, DCLU
 Lisa Rowe, Bentall
 John Eskelin, DON
 Andrew Smith, Callison Architects
 John Jackson, Bentall
 George Griffin, GSM
 Claudio Gvincher, Bentall
 Tracy O'Day, Bentall
 Vince Ferrese, Mithun Architects
 Chris Aggerholm, Bentall
 Phiyona Au-Yeung, Callison Architects
 Rick Phillippe, Callison Architects
 Erik Gunderson, Callison Architects
 Cynthia FAW, Callison Architects
 Nancy Alice, Callison Architects
 Beverly Barnett, SEATRAN

Time: 1 hour (SDC Ref. # 169 | DC00203)

Action: **The Commission appreciates the engaging presentation by Proponents of the project for its proposed alley vacation through the block bounded by 8th, 9th, Virginia, and Stewart and makes the following comments and recommendations:**

- **clarified that the role of the Commissions is to assess the merits of the proposed alley vacation and that it is not within the Commission's purview to rule on view corridors**
- **alleys offer alternative routes through the City even where the grid is skewed**
- **in giving up these valuable passageways, the Commission has to be convinced that there is true public benefit and that the City will get more than it is losing**
- **asks the team to develop an alternative that maintains the alley on the**

surface level and requires a subterranean vacation only. The Commission encourages the proponents to study examples of small scale, successful public open spaces not associated with private corporate development

- **reminds the team that the Commission is most concerned with the pedestrian experience of the City. As regards the question of the view corridor, the Commission is concerned about the strategic role of the downtown as an 18-hour city and does not want to compromise the density of the downtown. If there are 360 degree protected views of all city landmarks the City will suffer from urban sprawl in order to protect them**
- **reminds the proponents that the through block view is also important to the pedestrian on the street**
- **encourages the proponents to further develop the ground-level public open space and the mid-block connection to 9th Avenue which has been designated as a “Green Street”; and**
- **will review this alley vacation proposal again at a future Commission meeting, once the vacation petition is filed.**

Proponents of the project briefed the Commission for its proposed alley vacation through the block. The partial block development sponsored by Bentall requires harmonizing the neighborhood plans of Pine and Denny Triangle. Three schemes were presented that either include the Telco building or presume it will remain as existing. Each either preserves the view corridor or does not. All schemes feature two buildings connected by various open spaces. The scheme favored by the team involves 450 residential units, a childcare facility, 35,000 square feet of open space, and a formal response to the view corridor from 4 Columns Park to the Space Needle. The open space on the upper level connects the residential spaces and offers a visual reference to the alley. Ninth Avenue is a Green Street and the team intends to accommodate it. The purchase of 60 rural credits means that the city will contribute \$500,000 to the Green Street program.

Key Commissioner Comments and Concerns

- Commiserates with the Pike/Pine neighborhood on the loss of views due to the Convention Center and would like to know what portion of the Space Needle and what kind of envelope around that view is important to them.
 - Pike/Pine neighborhood representative stated that a narrow view is unavoidable but they would not like people to have to wait in line to see the view.

- Would like to see the benefits to the “ Public”. Wants the team to demonstrate what these advantages are. Thinks that the open space should be open to the public and should be inviting. Would like to see an alternative that requires only a subterranean alley vacation.
- Asks what building height would be possible to allow the top of the Needle to be visible. SEPA is vague on the protection of Landmark views. It is expected that a draft proposal clarifying this issue will be available for the Council and the public to review by February.
- Would like to know if there is some way that the Design Commission can offer assistance in addressing the question of bridges between Capitol Hill and downtown.
- Asks if it is possible to maintain the alley on the ground level because alleys offer important alternative routes through the City and reiterates the position of the Design Commission in this regard. Asks what the change would mean to the pedestrian.

